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March 1994 Volume 17, Number 3

dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Green, greener...

Reducing waste by recycling in government offices has been so successful that it's going a step further.

Later this month, MCSS staff at Hepburn Block in Toronto will join other OPS colleagues such as those at 2195 Yonge St. when they become part of the Maximum Green recycling campaign.

All wastepaper cans in individual workstations will disappear from Hepburn by Mar. 28 (the official launch date), as they did from 2195 Yonge on Feb. 14. Instead, employees take their garbage and throw-aways to recycling areas, where they deposit recyclables in colour-coded recycling bins. Staff will be given their own "green" desktop papersavers and black mini-garbage bins to carry their trash to the recycling area.

The recycling centres set up on each floor will have clearly-marked bins in beige (polystyrene #6, plastic), blue (glass and aluminum), black (non-recyclables such as

tissues, carbon paper), brown (old papers and white (newspaper and now glossy paper).

Maximum Green is part of the Green Workplace program. Maximum Green is already at the ministries of the Attorney General, Environment and Energy and at Management Board Secretariat in Toronto. It's also in place at the Macdonald-Cartier government building in Kingston.

The Green Workplace program, begun in 1991, aimed to reduce waste sent to landfill from government buildings by 50 per cent before 1995. Waste audits showed in 1992 that we had already met that target.

However, as much as 40 per cent of waste is still made up of recyclable materials, partly because so much more material can now be recycled. Maximum Green challenges the OPS to cut its garbage in half again by recycling through the expanded program.

Paper products that can now be recycled include Post-it notes, envelopes with windows or labels, brown envelopes and manila file folders and envelopes. And now, staples don't have to be removed.

Paul Skowron of the Physical Workplace Programs Unit is the MCSS "greening" co-ordinator. Contact him at 416-327-0547 for any information about greening or Maximum Green.



"A" for staff effort in Brockville

For eight Brockville-area women, the staff of the ministry's Brockville income maintenance office get an "A" for effort in helping them get the support they needed to stay in school.

It started when the eight women, who are on social assistance, came to income maintenance Supervisor Gloria Shaw in an agitated state. They had all enrolled in a hairstyling course at St. Lawrence College, only to find after starting the course that their student loans — to pay for tuition, books and supplies of about \$2,700 each — would not come through.

There were several reasons given: the hairstyling course was not in an "approved" category and therefore not eligible for Canada student loans or for Ontario student assistance (OSAP); child care subsidies, which most of the women needed because they are sole-support parents, already had long waiting lists.

But more upsetting to them was being told that their social assistance counted as income. Under the formula to determine eligibility for loans, the women had too much income from social assistance to qualify for loans.

The Brockville office had begun a



Hairstyling students Cindy St. John (left) and Barbara Asprey (right) are still in school, thanks to the efforts of Brockville income maintenance staff Gloria Shaw and Jacque White.

Transition to Self Reliance (TSR) program in January 1992. "Our goal was to work with people on social assistance and help direct them into employment and retraining opportunities," says Gloria. "We do this by identifying barriers and goals and working to connect clients to various community resources."

Here was a case in which people were doing what they could to become self-reliant, "and they were running into obstacles that prevented that," observes Gloria. "The province is trying to get people off social assistance and into the workforce and

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Update on bargaining status

On Feb. 14, the components of Bill 117 that cover reform of the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act (CECBA) and political activity rights for Crown employees were passed.

The reforms to CECBA mean that collective bargaining rights have been extended to some Ontario Public Service management and excluded employees who did not have them before.

By now all affected employees (except those currently in the Ontario Public Service Employees Union) will have received a letter with details about how Bill 117 affects their position. In MCSS, the changes affect about 500 employees.

For those management and excluded staff who are moving into bargaining units, there will be no loss of seniority and staff retain entitlement to the management compensation option.

For classified and unclassified employees whose positions move into OPSEU, the change means:

- your pay, current position, pension entitlements and seniority remain the same;
- your required unpaid leave days under the social contract will be governed by the OPSEU agreement;
- you'll gain some new rights and entitlements, such as the right to be represented by a bargaining agent;
- you will pay union dues beginning from

the date Bill 117 was proclaimed into law;

- in the event of a strike, you will not go to work unless you provide essential services.

Everything remains the same as before for classified and unclassified employees moving into unrepresented units; these staff can organize under a bargaining agent if desired. You may have been represented by AMAPCEO or another employee association under the Social Contract Act, but this does not mean that you will be automatically represented by these associations for bargaining purposes. (The Ontario Labour Relations Act lays out rules for certifying trade unions and for organizing unrepresented employees.)

Some employees will be excluded from the CECBA reform. These include staff working in a confidential capacity in ministers' offices; analysts advising cabinet, ministers or deputies on employment-related legislation affecting public sector employment; labour relations mediators/conciliators; Ontario Provincial Police; employees of colleges; doctors, interns and residents; and judges. Other features of Bill 117 include expanded political activity rights for Crown employees, the right to strike while protecting essential services, and protection for "whistleblowers" (to be proclaimed at a later date).

You can obtain more information from your manager or your local human resources representative.

A forum for front-line workers

Front-line workers in Hamilton recently got together in a gathering that was the first of its kind.

The Social Services/Environment Networking Day was a forum developed to give front-line workers from different levels of government and related community agencies a chance to

meet each other and discuss the issues that face them in serving their clients — social assistance recipients. Their common goal is to help their clients become employed. Participants in the networking forum came from a wide variety of services: Family Benefits staff of MCSS, jobsOntario staff, municipal General Welfare Assistance employees, and people from the local Canada Employment and Immigration Centre (CEIC), Mohawk College, the local boards of education and other community service providers.

The networking forum was organized by

a local group of representatives from different social services and employment-related agencies called the Social Assistance Recipients (SAR) Working Group, which first began meeting in the late 1980s. The SAR Working Group members worked on the idea of a forum for front-line workers to share information and resources with each other that would result in more effective client services. The introduction of jobsOntario served to reinforce this need.

Funding was allocated through a general arrangement from CEIC. A committee chaired by Ken

Baker, training officer for the Hamilton-Wentworth Region's social services department, put together the agenda. Our representative from Family Benefits was Peter J. MacDonald, the jobsOntario liaison officer

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new
networking

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MCSS
Restructuring

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• Identity and marine issues
• Monitor programs

- part of Program Management Division (PMO)
- supports strategic decision-making related to effective program management
- provides expertise through analysis and development of options
- manages Ministry Communication Networks
- provides direct provincial services including Chaplaincy, Adoption Disclosure, Crown Ward Review, Child Abuse Register

The restructuring of the ministry, along with other changes, means a number of people and branches have moved or re-organized.

To help you keep track of who's where and how to reach them, *Dialogue* will

publish detailed organization charts. This month, it's the Management Support Branch in a clip-and-save format. Remember that you can enlarge this on a photocopy if you wish.

"A" for staff effort
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investing in the future, and these women were getting some mixed messages."

"We're all trying to get off the system and it seemed like a lot of people were shutting the door in our faces," says Barbara Asprey, one of the hairstyling students.

Cindy St. John, a solo-support parent, noted that currently social assistance allows mothers to stay at home until their children are 18. "But by then, really, who would want to hire us?" she says.

The women were on the verge of quitting school. Gloria and Jacque White, the TSR worker in the Brockville office, got to work.

Working through the Kingston Area Office, they were able to obtain additional jobs Ontario-subsidized child care spaces as well as some up-front funding for immediate child care and other expenses. They contacted the college, Ontario Student Assistance and the Canada Student Loans office.

The women appealed the loan decision, and procedures have been changed so that social assistance is not considered income for student-loan purposes by the province. Hairstyling courses at community colleges and private schools are now eligible for funding.

The Brockville women had their fees waived until the loans came through. They will graduate in April and have invited Gloria and Jacque to come to the graduation ceremony.

Because the Brockville case has set a precedent, OSAP can expect more students to apply for loans and assistance for hairstyling courses.

Gloria and Jacque were happy that their efforts were able to make a difference. The case received a considerable amount of media coverage as a good-news story with a happy ending.

Better Beginnings on video

How can we improve the lives of children and prevent emotional and behavioural problems before they begin?

See for yourself in a soon-to-be-released video that shows how the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project is working in 12 communities around Ontario.

The video, also called "Better Beginnings, Better Futures," shows the many ways that this province-wide demonstration project is improving the present and the futures of more than 4,000 Ontario children and their parents.

"This video gives you a better idea of how the project works than any report or briefing note could," says Carol Gill Russell, a policy analyst in the Children's Services Branch and co-ordinator of the Better Beginnings project.

Scenes from each of the demonstration sites are shown in the video. The programs are set up in church basements, storefronts and recreation centres in seven urban neighbourhoods and five First Nations reserves from Kenora to Cornwall and from Sudbury to Toronto. The projects serve children from newborns to age eight from diverse communities such as new immigrants, francophones and aboriginal families.

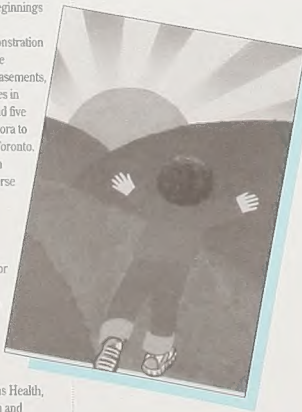
The video shows how each community has been able to tailor their programs to the specific needs of children and families in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Funding for the project is from MCSS, the ministries of Education and Training as well as Health, the federal Department of Indian and

Northern Affairs and the Secretary of State.

The video is accompanied by two summaries: "Model, Program and Research Overview," and the booklet "1993 Progress Report: Description and Overview." Production of the video and documents explaining the project was co-ordinated by the MCSS Communications and Marketing Branch.

You can place your name on the mailing list for this "update package" by contacting the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse. Telephone 416-408-2121 (or toll-free at 1-800-263-2846); fax 408-2122.



A forum for front-line workers
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for the Hamilton Area Office.

Keynote speaker was Nick Catalano, director of economic development for Hamilton-Wentworth. He highlighted the areas of growth within the local economy such as health science, environment, hospitality and the cargo and freight industries, and their impact on the employment scene.

Discussion of the links and interaction among the service providers was led by Mike Pennock, executive director of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

Workshops included such topics as how to deal with change, dealing with difficult situations, stress and time management, and multiculturalism and barriers to

employment. Time was also allotted for informal networking so workers could "put a face to the name on the phone."

Feedback was very positive; one agency representative later said, "I have lived in this community all my life and I didn't realize we had such a variety of services to offer our clients!"

It's hoped the networking forum will not

People on the move

Marg Gallow has been seconded to lead a new government initiative entitled the Office of Youth Justice. This program will be responsible for developing a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to Ontario's youth justice system.



Marg Gallow

Marg will report to the deputy minister of Correctional Services. Marg has held many senior positions at MCSS, including Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Program Management Division, Central Regional Director, Administrator at Huronia Regional Centre and as an area manager. She most recently worked on social contract issues as they relate to our ministry.

Michael Bates is the new project manager for the child care jobs Ontario project in Management Support Branch, working with Karen Glass. Michael was previously with the Toronto Area Office's Child Care Unit. Lawrence Yaskiel continues to be program support officer to the project. Marni Campbell, who has been providing interim support to the project during the transition period, has accepted a position in the Child Care Policy Branch.

Recent and upcoming retirements and departures:

Fred Campbell, program supervisor in the Toronto Area Office, is retiring after 27 years with the ministry.

Murray Hutchings, manager of human resources at Huronia Regional Centre, retired at the end of February after 34 years of service.

A joint party was held to celebrate the retirements of Joe Brazas, Ron Bull, Norm Cuthbert and Lloyd Kishino. These four employees, who all worked at 5140 Yonge St., have collectively served in the Ontario Public Service for more than 100 years. Joe was with Operations and Support, Ron with Finance and Administration Unit, Norm with Records and Form Services, and Lloyd with Children's Systems (and well-known for his work for Blue Jays Kids Day).

Also recently departed from 5140 Yonge is Larry Lurge, who is pursuing a new career at Queensway General Hospital in Etobicoke after more than 20 years with the ministry.

George London leaves the Financial and Administrative Services Branch after 24 years with the ministry.

Jim Pride has retired as the North Bay Area Manager. He was with the OPS 26 years and in his career had been a probation officer, program supervisor and Sudbury area manager.

be a one-time-only event. Discussions are under way about holding mini-versions of the forum throughout the year and how to organize and pay for them so that the enthusiasm from the first forum can be maintained.

Notes from the rural child care conference

By Julia Naczynski

A farm may seem to be an idyllic place to bring up children, but it is also a place fraught with potential danger from machinery, chemicals and livestock.

The family farm is a workplace and access to child care is real issue for farm families. Many rural communities are banding together to form their own non-profit charitable organizations to support their child-care needs.

A number of child care service models were presented at the Rural Child Care Conference held Jan. 20-22 at Geneva Park in Orillia. This gathering of about 180 parents, board members and staff of child care service providers was jointly sponsored by MCSS, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Health and Welfare Canada with the Ontario Farm Women's Network. It was the first major International Year of the Family event for Ontario; Minister Tony Silipo was the opening speaker.

Participants learned that their organizations provide similar core services,

such as child-parent resource centres, toy lending libraries, staffed play groups, licensed child care spaces, licensed home care providers and parent support and education. In most cases, services were either free or at low cost. Some organizations offer unique programs especially designed to meet the particular needs of their communities; a few of these are outlined here.

While many of the models dealt with the particular needs of farming families, participants were reminded that rural life does not just mean farming, but a varied, seasonal and often family-based economy that also includes tourism, forestry, mining and those who commute from rural homes to city jobs, or who work shifts.

Besides the models workshops described here, the conference included a range of workshops and a series of action groups that made recommendations for the future. Proceedings from the conference will be available later this spring.



Illustration: Deanne Mendenhall Art & Film

Child care in English and French

Judy Parker of Temiskaming Child Care in Earlton said her group offers both English and French language play groups. People in the service area did not want bilingual play groups and certain areas in Temiskaming District are mainly francophone, she said.

Her association received one-time funding to provide a "maternity package" or kit of information for new mothers in the district. These were available in doctors' offices and included a safety plug for electrical outlets to get mothers-to-be thinking about child safety, she said. The group also made up t-shirts and

sweatshirts with the Temiskaming Child Care logo on it to get more recognition of its name in its communities.

Temiskaming stopped offering home care on farms because it became too difficult to offer steady employment to the senior high school students who staffed it, she said. On sunny days, there was a high demand for services and on rainy days there would be none at all, she said. However, the group does offer seasonal child care, picking up children to take them to the centre in town and dropping them off as late as 8 p.m. in the summer.

Care right on the farm

Lynn Outram and Andrea Ridenour described the Durham West Farm Child Care Program, which began in 1988 after the deaths of three local children in farm accidents. Durham West uses a community partnership service delivery model, which includes such partners as the local Women's Institute, the Farm Safety Association, the local health department, a children's services council and the region's social services day care as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and MCSS.

The group also piloted an on-farm child care program. For \$4.50 per hour, said director Lynn Outram, farm parents could hire a trained student to supervise their children in their own home.



Lynn Outram (standing) and Andrea Ridenour describe the founding of the Durham West Farm Child Care Program, which began six years ago after the deaths of three local children in farm accidents.

Where tourism is a major employer

Linda Burton of Muskoka Family Focus noted that her parent association is one of the few in a tourism-designated area.

Construction work also offers unpredictable employment, so "when somebody wants something built, you do it now and work as many hours as it takes to get the job done." A number of families in the area have one spouse who works in Toronto, sometimes staying in the city overnight several nights a

week, which leads to "single-parent syndrome" for the at-home parent, she noted.

Her group has a toll-free office number so parents don't have to pay a long-distance charge. They are also planning to set up satellite drop-in centres in two smaller communities, in conjunction with the boards of education. They will be housed in schools.

Parents prefer licenced care

Janet Stephens of Oxford Community Child Care described the Woodstock area program, which began in 1987 as a result of a survey by Women in Supportive Agriculture. An informal registry program, which provided the names of unlicensed caregivers, passed out of existence because parents preferred licenced child care programs, she said. Oxford provides monthly workshops and newsletters to member parents, and loans out safety equipment such as gates, playpens and high chairs to caregivers registered with the program.

This year, Oxford will be offering a 30-hour training program to local high school students to increase the number of trained caregivers available to help farm families during the busy summer growing season, she said.

Drop-in for school kids

Jane Robb and Karen Underwood of Southeast Grey Community Outreach described Kids and Us and its "hub" model, which provides services geared to the specific needs of families living within specific geographic boundaries, or "hubs." There are 450 families in the service area, with a committee in each community to determine what parents' needs are. For example, some hubs have licenced child care while others do not, said Jane. Also available is a drop-in centre for 10- to 13-year-olds, and respite care aimed solely at stay-at-home parents. A big issue in the Grey service area is the lack of public transportation, noted Jane, who works at the Dundalk Resource Centre.

National group for rural families

A special participant in the child care conference was Jane Wilson of Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth, Manitoba (population 120). Lakeview offers the only rural child care centre in Manitoba geared to farm children.

The parent association was able to tap into funding from Health and Welfare Canada's Child Care Initiatives Fund and logged 850 hours of volunteer time to build its centre. However, the Manitoba government will not fund the group the way it will an urban child care centre, she said.

Jane invited participants to become charter members of the new Coalition for Rural Child Care, which is intended to be



Jane Wilson, who helped found the only rural child care centre in Manitoba geared to farm children, invited child care conference participants to join the new national Coalition for Rural Child Care.

a national voice in support of rural child care in Canada.

Help for kids with delays

Eva Massey-Henry of Lennox and Addington Resources for Children (LARC) in Napanee described a resource teaching program for children aged two to six. These are aimed at children who are mentally or physically delayed, or at risk of delay. Staff work with these families to eventually integrate the child

into a preschool setting. LARC houses some of its programs in a former dental coach (an old train compartment that was a mobile dental office traveling to remote communities). The coach is now parked on a school lot and is the site for play groups and parent education programs.

A multi-purpose child care centre

Brenda Grandby and Tracy Oeschagel of the North Wellington Advisory Group outlined activities at the Drew Community Child Care Centre, which she described as "the only day care in Ontario located on a baseball diamond." The group was able to

obtain funding for a two-storey portable building on a municipally-owned lot, provided the building could be multi-purpose and used as a community centre — hence its location on a community ball diamond.

Racism interim report released

The Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System released an interim report, "Racism Behind Bars," on Feb. 1.

The commission found both overt and systemic racism in Ontario's correction facilities and has made 10 interim recommendations to combat racism. These include:

- the appointment of an anti-racism co-ordinator for adult offenders and another for youth corrections;
- abolition of racial segregation of prisoners;
- standardized training and classification qualifications for staff;
- the development and implementation by May 1 of culturally-appropriate services.

A final report is to be released later this

year. The commission can be reached via its communications/consultations director, Joan Jenkinson, at 416-327-6293.

The Children's Services Branch and Management Support Branch are jointly developing an action plan focussing on recommendations and issues in the interim report that have particular relevance for MCSS.

In a related initiative, Marg Gallow has been seconded to the Ministry of Correctional Services to lead the new Office of Youth Justice. This program will be responsible for developing a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to Ontario's youth justice system. (See "People on the move" for more about Marg, who was previously a senior executive with MCSS.)

Training for employment staff: update

Two years ago, the Employment Training Steering Committee — a joint venture of MCSS and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) — was formed. Using the slogan, "Working Together Works," this project has developed a comprehensive training program consisting of 10 training modules designed especially for people involved in delivering vocational rehabilitation services and municipal/First Nations employment programs.

In recognition of the joint project's success, OMSSA has received an additional year of funding from MCSS to manage this project as it moves into the implementation stage.

Administrators, supervisors and managers are being given an opportunity to preview the final training products that their staff helped develop. This "appreciation training seminar" takes place Apr. 13 in Mississauga. Three of the 10 training modules will be highlighted — assessment, problem-solving, and communications and marketing.

For more information, contact Employment Project co-ordinator Chris Armstrong at the OMSSA Mississauga office (tel. 905-629-3115; fax 629-1633).

New items from directorate

The poster shown here is just one of several new products now available from the Ontario Women's Directorate about stopping and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. The items include an employers' guide to developing

policies and procedures, a video, and separate training manuals about sexual harassment issues for employers and employees. For more information, contact the OWD's Consultative Services Branch at 416-314-3994.



PINUPS



COMMENTS



TOUCHING



SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE: It has to STOP.

Year of Family is under way

The United Nations-designated International Year of the Family is well under way and a number of events are scheduled in Ontario to celebrate IYF throughout the year.

Some events that have already saluted IYF include the Rural Child Care Conference (see coverage on page 3) in Orillia, winter carnivals, fairs and family-oriented events.

Some upcoming events to note are as follows:

Mar. 22 - 23, Work and Family Challenge Conference sponsored by the Conference Board of Canada in Toronto; Mar. 24 - 25, Community Family sponsored by Halton Hills Parks and Recreation Department in Georgetown; Mar. 30 - 31, ice show by the Dryden Figure Skating Club; Apr. 9, Parenting in the 'Nineties, Partners' Advisory Council Home and School

Association in Elora; Apr. 9, Quality Child Care Counts, by Family Resources for Victoria County in Lindsay; Apr. 14, provincial conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario in Toronto; Apr. 14 - 15, Family

Conference by the City of York Board of Education in Toronto; Apr. 16, annual conference of the

Independent Child Care Caregivers Association in Gloucester;

Apr. 17 - 23, IYF Volunteer Week in the Township of King in King City.

If you would like a contact name for any of these events, please call Irv Kurstein at the ministry's Communications and Marketing Branch at 416-325-5196 or on e-mail at KIRSTEIN_I.

The ESR: Open doors to an open workplace

As you already know, our ministry is currently conducting an employment systems review (ESR). The review is taking a close look at formal and informal organizational systems, practices and attitudes that may cause barriers to recruitment and career advancement for current and future staff, particularly those in employment equity-designated groups.

Here's a status report on what the ESR task force members have been working on:

- The Data Analysis Working Group has gathered and analyzed information and a data analysis report has been completed. This report is being used by the other groups to "drive" the ESR process. Results have helped to communicate the current equity situation and to establish areas to focus interviews, document reviews and further analysis.

- The Interview Working Group is reviewing questions used by other ministries in their ESRs in order to prepare for the MCSS interviews. The group is also reviewing issues such as confidentiality, freedom of information, and workplace harassment and

discrimination policies. Training is currently under way to prepare task force members for the interview process.

- The Document Review Working Group is looking at the ways our ministry's employment systems documents its human resources policies, its jobs descriptions, recruitment, selection process, training programs and terminations. All these will be reviewed to determine if they contribute to inequities faced by designated groups in the ministry.

- The Communications Working Group is aimed at raising awareness of the ESR throughout MCSS and to encourage the support of staff. Another important goal is to keep ministry staff and other audiences informed about the development and the status of the ESR.

A special DEC account (ESR Project) has been established to invite MCSS employees to offer their input. You can also fax your inquiries and ideas to the ESR Project at 416-327-0568. You can also mail them to Hunter Saggart, the ESR project co-ordinator, 56 Wellesley St. W., 17th floor, Toronto M7A 1E9.



dialogue

Dialogue is published 10 times a year by the Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) to provide an information forum for all members of the ministry. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect ministry or government policy.

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